



## LAKE STEVENS POLICE DEPARTMENT EARNS RECREATIONAL BOATING SAFETY LIFE SAVING AWARD

On Thursday, October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2014 Lake Stevens Police Officers Kerry Bernhard, Steve Warbis, and Chad Christensen, along with their supervisor, Sergeant Ron Brooks, will be awarded the **Recreational Boating Safety Life Saving Award** at the 2014 Washington State Marine Law Enforcement Conference.

This award recognizes an officer who has demonstrated the highest professional responsibility, courage and bravery when taking actions to rescue a person or persons involved in a recreation boating activity to prevent injury or death.

On Thursday, January 2nd, 2014 at about 1433 hours Lake Stevens Police responded to a call on Lake Stevens regarding two males that were in the water and in crisis due to their canoe having been swamped and partially submerged.

The adult males had put in at Wyatt Park and were testing their new 15' Aluminum canoe on Lake Stevens. The lake had a heavy chop due to strong winds and as the vessel approached approximately 300-400 yards from the Wyatt Park Boat Ramp, the vessel turned broadside to the wind. The heavy chop swamped the vessel causing it to overturn and eject the occupants into the water.

No life jackets were on board the vessel or worn by the males. The males attempted to swim to shore but were unable to continue due to symptoms of hypothermia effecting their ability to swim.

Officer Steve Warbis and Officer Chad Christensen responded to the park and acted as spotters, directing the boat crew to the two men in the water.

At about 1440 hours the males were contacted by the Lake Stevens Police Department vessel, operated by Sgt. Ron Brooks and Officer Kerry Bernhard. The two were not able to help them self's out of the water and had to be drug into the boat. They were taken to shore where they were turned over to aide personnel. The males were transported to Providence Medical Center and treated for hypothermia. The vessel was recovered undamaged from the water and returned to the owner. The water temperature was found to be 44 degrees.

Had it not been for the quick response of the officers involved, this incident could had ended in tragedy. Sgt. Ron Brooks and Officer Kerry Bernhard demonstrated their knowledge, skill and proficiency to successfully complete this type of rescue, to include quickly locating the victims, safe extraction of the victims, and proper post event care for the victims.

Sgt. Ron Brooks, Officer Kerry Bernhard, Officer Steve Warbis, and Officer Chad Christensen worked as a team and distinguished themselves in keeping with the highest traditions of law enforcement by showing resilience in the presence of adversity and danger, facing the unknown on behalf of strangers and tending to the welfare of others out of the genuine desire to help and be of service to the community.